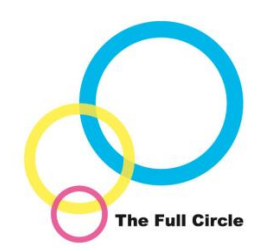


# The Full Circle

Michelle Summerbell  
Team Manager, The Full Circle

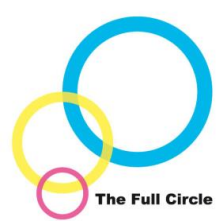


- Durham County Council is unique in that it has employed a therapeutic team continuously since 1995 in order to meet the mental health needs of the children and young people being supported by the Local Authority.
- Durham's therapeutic team, The Full Circle sits under the umbrella of Countywide Specialist Services and is a specialised, integrated children's mental health service for children particularly for those who have experienced complex trauma through neglect and abuse.
- The Team consists of therapeutically trained social workers, a Clinical Nurse Specialist and a Consultant Clinical Psychologist (both employed by NHS). The benefit Full Circle can provide in addition to private therapy providers is a more holistic approach, school training, having a good understanding of social work and close links with care teams and professional support networks around a family.
- Complex childhood trauma can lead to developmental trauma - it can affect the way the child views themselves, others and the world around them, brain development and subsequently their social, emotional and educational progress.
- The impact of developmental trauma can reach long into adulthood. Effective and targeted services are therefore essential to mitigate the impact of trauma and support children to heal.



# How do we work and what do we offer?

- The Full Circle service works right across children's services and early help, but the majority of our support is provided to children looked after and families seeking post-adoption support. This is because therapeutic support requires safety and stability around the children with all basic parenting in place.
- The Team has close links with agencies such as CAMHS and NSPCC and over time The Full Circle service has developed a positive and respected reputation, feeding into the development of local service provision.
- The Full Circle provides consultation, advice & guidance to parents, carers and a wide range of professionals.
- We also provide therapeutic support directly to children and young people (C&YP), their families and carers using a range of evidence-based approaches to therapeutic intervention.
- The Full Circle also provides training for professionals and carers around attachment difficulties, the impact of trauma on children and how to help them heal.



# The benefits – a case study

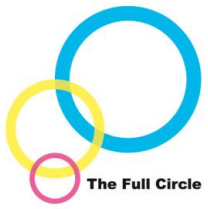
**Child** - S is a 15 year old young person residing in a DCC children's home following previous foster care breakdown due to S's behaviour/physical aggression towards carers. S was referred into Full Circle by her social worker as there were concerns re aggression, self harm, sleep, missing from home episodes and potential for CSE (child sexual exploitation). S also showed some challenges in school which led to an exclusion and there were worries that S's learning and social skills were being significantly impacted.

**Trauma** - S had a significant trauma history from her time both with birth parents and subsequently adoptive parents. Trauma included concerns re potential drug use in-utero, parental chaotic lifestyle, domestic abuse, adult drug misuse, neglect, emotional and physical abuse, as well as an allegation of sexual abuse.

**Work completed/outcomes** - Training and direct therapeutic parenting support has been provided for residential staff. Education support was also offered. In addition, direct work has been ongoing with S with a Therapeutic Social Worker covering S's thoughts, feelings and emotions and developing healthy coping mechanisms, as well as life process work. The Consultant Clinical Psychologist has also supported around sleep issues for S and there is also a plan to assess for PTSD/consider whether Trauma Focussed CBT may be the next stage of intervention.

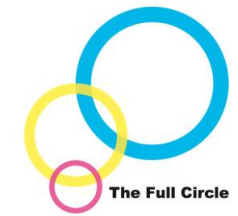
Although S can still have challenges, there is placement stability and there has been a reduction in incidents/concerning behaviours (S is no longer considered at risk of CSE). S also now has the ability to repair relationships. S is attending an alternative school provision and engaging with education staff.

**Feedback from a Team Manager** - *"Can I please share this incredible practice from Orchard House, Full Circle and \*\*\*(SW). This concerns S. We met last week and had a group supervision with her care team about what we were doing and why and were we trying to "fix". It was a really positive meeting...[residential staff] had already reflected... we have seen a huge change. Honestly this is massive for S. Please can you ask you to celebrate this with them and the whole care team who were prepared to change and not give up on her. "*



# Key developments 2022- 2023

- Increased offer to DCC residential homes – consultation and training. Recruiting for a new psychologist to support meeting the demand.
- Development and recruitment to a new Therapeutic Assistant & Trainer post.
- Development of the Full Circle Care Leavers offer has commenced – in addition to drop-in support for staff, we are planning topic specific workshops for Care Leavers at the Care Leavers Hub.
- Trauma training offer and workshops roll-out continues to social care staff and professionals. Bespoke training for staff teams.
- Virtual schools offer extended and continues – provision of training and consultation for education staff. Over 40+ school delivered to so far this year, plus Virtual School Caseworkers & Designated Teachers.
- Successful joined up working due to weekly attendance at weekly CAMHS SPA huddles – helping to determine most appropriate mental health support for C&YP in Durham. Promotion of Traded Services via this route.
- Webpage and Full Circle branding completed and operational <https://www.durham.gov.uk/fullcircle>
- New set of operational processes and updated criteria created and to be published



# Summary of outcomes

- Up to the end of quarter 3, 476 referrals were received into Full Circle – an increase on the same time last financial year, with an average of 170 cases open for ongoing work/support at any one time.
- Outcome measures identified that, 95% of children who had been open to Full Circle had improved outcomes across a range of areas.
- Full Circle were proud to receive the Investing in Children Membership Award™ with C&YP finding Full Circle support invaluable:

*"I mean they are good, they did do a lot of listening to me about what I wanted, we then did a family tree and talked about why I was in care and helped me with my anger and emotions loads". (Young Person)*

- Ofsted feedback (2022): As well as regularly highlighting positive practice throughout the Inspection, in their report, Ofsted also said:

*"They receive tailored and highly effective support with their emotional needs from the specialist therapeutic Full Circle team. Foster carers and adopters are well supported by social workers and Full Circle in the transition and continuing care of children placed with them."*